

THE
HISTORY
OF
Queen Elizabeth,
AND
HER GREAT FAVORITE
EARL of ESSEX.

PART the FIRST.



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THE
FIRST PART

QUEEN ELIZABETH
 AND
EARL OF ESSEX.

THE extraordinary merits of the Earl of Essex, the high dignities he enjoyed, and the great honours the Queen so liberally bestowed on him, were matters of different speculation to those that were spectators of his sudden fall. They well knew that the Queen had conferred on him the greatest honours of the kingdom ; and even at the time of his fall he was General of her army against the Earl of Tyrone, who had raised a rebellion in Ireland, and yet so very powerful were his enemies, that all his precautions were in vain ; he saw, but could not avert his fate ; for after all his strenuous efforts he was confined a prisoner in his own house,

as they who were afraid he would one day overtop them all, resolved to crush him at once. But though the Earl of Essex had done great services by his valour to the state, and the Queen wanted neither wisdom to discern it, nor goodness to reward it, yet did the Earl's advancement proceed from a more secret cause insomuch, that if he had never signalized himself by his great actions, yet had the Queen retained such a kindness for him, as had placed him in her thoughts above all the rest of her subjects, and that before he could pretend to any thing by his services.

Queen Elizabeth was indeed arrived to a pitch of glory above all the women in that age, not only for her dignity but for those extraordinary qualities of mind, as courage, wisdom, and conduct ; but all these were so far from being proof against the power of love, that they made the passion burn more fierce ; and this it was that made her to have such a great tenderness for the unfortunate Earl when he appeared as a criminal. For the Queen could not forbear loving, yet used all imaginable caution to prevent the discovery of the

passion which was not in her power to conceal. This made her keep her bed, and admit of no company but the Countess of Nottingham ; before her she gave free vent to her tears, the cause whereof the Countess could not conjecture. She had entertained some suspicion of the Queen's passion for Essex, and therefore thought herself more than a little concerned to find it out. The Queen's grief was too great to be kept in ; she frequently sighing and repeated the name of Essex :—This confirmed the suspicion of the Countess, though she concealed it, and seemed only sensible of the Queen's disquiet, endeavouring to comfort her, putting her in mind how serviceable her virtue might be to her ; that virtue which had so long rendered her the wonder of the whole world.—Ah ! Madam, said the Queen, interrupting the Countess, you do not know me ; the force I have put upon myself has railed me above the infirmities of nature ; but alas ! the case is otherwise, for the poor Elizabeth is a slave to her own weakness, and has all along but sacrificed to reputation the quiet of her soul, and happiness of her days. The

Earl of Essex is no less famous for his rebellion against me, than his victory over my heart ; you know what I have done to raise him, nor can you be ignorant how ill he has requited me by his crimes ; a man, who being governor of Ireland, General of my army, in quiet possession of the best offices in my kingdom, and master of my affections ; yet to conspire against that authority I was too much inclined to give him a share of ; and perhaps against a life I took no pleasure in, but the opportunity I had by it to make him happy. Thus far the Queen proceeded ; but it was not in her power to go any further ; but the Countess finding her own interest in the narration, was willing to have it continued ; and therefore by comforting the Queen, prevailed upon her to declare herself farther, which she did thus : Being established on the throne, I found my court filled with suitors ; it was in my power to make both a husband and a king at once : those who had most right to pretend to it, were the Earls of Somerset, Leicester, Arundel, and Hertford ; but finding myself uneasy through their solicitations, I was forced

to tell them I designed to live a single life ; and the better to content them, I advanced them by several considerable employments, with which they were so well satisfied, that three of them renounced their hopes ; but Leicester, whose ambition or flame was more constant than the rest, would not so soon make him part with his pretention, but still flattered himself with the hopes of succeeding at last, but hoped in vain. It was then the Earls of Northumbeland and Westmoreland rebelled, tht the Earl of Essex signalized himself against them.— It was from the moment I saw him first I may date the los of my repose ; then I became first acquainted with the uneasiness I had before been a stranger to ; and though I made the utmost efforts to resist it, yet I was forced to acknowledge his ascendancy ; and all the oppositions I made, served only to make the trial of his victory the more illustrious. Then making use of the services he had done me against the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, and the merits of his father, as a ground for my favour, so that the true cause of it might not be known,

I made him a Knight of the Garter, Master of the horse, and one of my Privy Council, although he was under age. Thus was I constrained, that I might indulge my weakness, to smother the dictates of reason, and heap on him fresh honour, that I might cherish my own inclinations for him.—About this time the King of Sweden, and the Emperor for his son, and the Duke of Anjou, made their several courts to me; which, though I received with that respect as became me, yet I ordered the matter so, that their ambassadors went home without any success. My aversion to foreign alliance revived the Earl of Leicester's declining hopes; and even Essex himself seemed revived thereat.—Not, says he, (as I was told afterwards) but the Queen acts discreetly in all she does; and her choice, if she has made one, had been decent and just; but indeed I think her so fit to reign alone, that I could not, without extreme great trouble, see her share her authority with a husband, who perhaps would become her master. The construction I made of this flattered me my desires were obtain-

ed, and that I had got his affections. Alas, how false that fond conjecture!— After the death of the Queen of Scots, the King of Spain entered into a league with the Pope against me, and having declared against my right to the crown, they jointly endeavoured to pull it from my head; I then thought it high time to provide for defending my realms; so that the Earl of Leicester was sent away with all the nobility of the kingdom, at the head of a numerous army; and the Earl of Essex was one of the first to follow him, and though I scarce knew how to let him go, yet I was unwilling the man I had such a kindness for should be idle at home, when an opportunity offered by glorious actions abroad to merit the tenderness I had for him. In this expedition heaven signalized the justness of our cause by its success, the very wind favouring our side. When the General of my army returned to London I was carried in triumph to St. Paul's, where, I may blush to say it, my joy to see the Earl of Essex was much greater than that for the victory over my enemies. Soon after this the Earl of Essex

fell into a deep melancholy.; I was the first that took notice of it, and guessed it the effect of some passion he was unwilling to disclose, and fancied myself the object of it, and sometimes wished he would declare his inclination. A cloud still hanged upon his brow, and it was a grief to see him grieve, and still fancying myself to be the cause, I was impatient to be certain, and could receive no satisfaction till he had declared himself: He wanted no opportunity, having free access to me; but as he made not the use of this privilege as I desired, I one day when he came to thank me for the government of Ireland, said, No more acknowledgments, my Lord; I am well satisfied of your merit, and only wish I could as easily remove your melancholy as bestow preferments on you; you may in your turn oblige me, who am fallen into a troublesome conjecture; it presses me hard to provide England a King, the choice is difficult, and I have no mind to make it among foreigners: you are discreet, and I will take your advice, speak freely, which of my subjects you think most worthy of this dignity. When I

and said thus, I fixed my eyes on him with so warm and languishing a look, as would have inspired the fearfuller with boldness; but the cold Earl replied, The business is so nice, Madam, I hope you will excuse my speaking. Did you know, said I, what moves me to this confidence in you, you would express yourself more freely: but tell me whether you think the Earl of Leicester deserves to be your prince? The Earl of Leicester, answered, he is well born, and will answer the honour your Majesty intends him. Is that all you have to say? said I. —Ah! Madam, answered he, with a sigh, I could say more for myself than for the Earl of Leicester. What hinders you? said I. The respect I have for your Majesty, answered he. I am in love, Madam, and it is not fit to make my Queen my confident. I could not forbear blushing, but replied, I have so much value for you, my Lord, that I have no aversion to be of your council. Well, Madam, since you will have it so, replied he, I must acquaint you that I am passionately enamoured with the Countess of Rutland; and that I cannot live without

your Majesty's consent she shall make me happy. — It is not easy to guess how much I was confounded at the defeating of my hopes by this explication; having flattered myself he would have named me as the object of his passion. However putting on all the assurance I was capable of, I said, You have made a good choice the Countess of Rutland is very deserving; it is your desire then, that I should give her to you? — Yes, Madam, replied he, more than I desire the empire of the universe. Well, go your way, said I, (to be rid of him) be assured that I will concern myself in your amour; but take heed you give not the Earl of Leicester the least intimation of what has passed. Not before I have orders from your Majesty, replied he, to congratulate your happiness, and pay him the devoirs of an affectionate subject.

O think, Madam, what a torment it was to find him so far from apprehending my meaning, that he went immediately to carry my rival the tidings of success with me, and new tenders of his love. Not long before I had sent to congratulate the King of Navarre on the accession

to the throne of France ; and being informed that he wanted assistance, I now sent the Earl of Essex with a considerable body of forces over, to get him out of the sight of his rival. Soon after the Countess of Rutland desired my permission to retire some distance from London, to which I readily consented ; after we had had the mortification to see the Earl set out. When France was quiet I ordered him to join Admiral Howard, who I had sent for Spain ; and that I might not diminish his honour, I gave him the like commission for this expedition as I did for that of France. In brief, having taken the necessary steps, he put to sea, in order for England ; but the fleet was dispersed by a dreadful storm, insomuch, that we had news the Earl of Essex was lost ; and then it was I became more sensible than ever of the regard I had for him ; and it is impossible to imagine what I suffered for him while I apprehended he was lost ; at last, however, news was brought me, that by the assistance of the Dutch Admiral he was arrived at Plymouth ; whence in a short time he came to court. But though I had grieved for his suppos.

ed death, and was rejoiced at his return ; yet the thoughts of seeing him sigh for another filled me with great uneasiness ; but I was agreeably surprised to find absence had weaned his affections from the Countess ; from being languishing and melancholy he was turned brisk, lively, and gay ; and I could not but think he looked as smiling though the Countess was absent, as if he had been in full possession of her. I see you again, said I to him, return with victory, but it is not now in my power to reward your services with the sight of the Countess of Rutland ; but if any thing I can do can comfort you—I am easily comforted for her absence, answered he, when I am permitted to see your Majesty ; I have no passion now but for the glory of serving your Majesty.—Are you no longer in love with the Countess of Rutland, replied I ? between hope and fear. No, Madam, said he, that lady has no more power over my heart, than any other of the court. A great many more things he said that made me think he had forgotten the Countess, and began to entertain some kindness for myself. About a week after

he desired leave to go into the country about his own private affairs, from whence he soon returned without any symptoms of his former passion.

On the news of the troubles in Ireland he begged that the quieting of that disturbance might be his province. You have done enough already, said I, and there is no occasion you should, by exposing yourself to new dangers, oblige me to new acknowledgements. I believe, Madam, said he, the favour I beg will be envied me; but I take the boldness to say, your Majesty cannot refuse it me, without being injurious to yourself; it may contribute to my meriting the favors you have already honoured me with. The zeal you express for undertaking great actions, replied I, may not possibly be so pleasing to me as you imagine, and all the advantages that may redound to England through your valour, are less considerably than the trouble it occasions me, who had rather hazard my crown than endanger your life. I am ambitious yet ~~not~~ ah! my Lord, save me the confusion of a more particular explanation of what you might easily long since have

understood. I might, said he, in some disorder, perhaps presume too far in my wishes. Wish boldly, said I ; I love, and I blush to tell you so, it is not that I am either ashamed or repent of it.— What ! Madam, cried he, like a man astonished, have you loved me ! and I been so unfortunate to make myself unworthy of your kindness, by not understanding your sighs Did my eyes never tell you what I looked for in your's ? said I. I never had the boldnes, answered he, to make constructions of your looks. Your fear was the effect of indifference, said I ; but no more of what is past. Tell me now, can you love me ? Rather ask me, Madam, answered he, if all the affections of my soul can merit your love ? and whether the Earl of Leicester, whom you design to make the happiest man on earth, shall not carry the day from me ? — The Earl of Leicester, said I, was but a pretence to make you speak ; I told you then truly the very thoughts I had of you ; my trouble for you was not small, both in your absence, and since your return ; but all that is forgotten ; be henceforth as I wish, and doubt not of being

happy. He seemed to be disordered at what I had said, which I then imputed as an effect of his overjoy. I now thought it time to be no longer scrupulous, for I had now gone so far there was no retreating ; and therefore added, I will no longer keep you under any uncertainty, but to convince you of what I have said, Take this (delivering him a ring) as the highest assurance of my favour ; keep it as a pledge of my kindness, which I conjure you to preserve in the state it is in ; and on that condition I promise never to deny you any thing you desire of me, when you shew me this ring, or send it me, though it cost me my life and fortune. At the receiving this ring his acknowledgments were fuitable to so great a favour ; nor was he wanting in promises of as high a nature. In a few days after he went to Ireland and left me in the greatest assurances that his passion was equal to mine ; but he he not been gone long there, and was hardly got up with the rebels, before he was represented to me as one of the greatest traitors to my crown and dignity, and charged with such crimes, that I could

notwithstanding his imprisonment, not that of his friend the Earl of Southampton.



You may save me the labor, Madam, of telling you the rest : His obstinate resistance, his want of respect for my orders, his imprisoning my ministers, his murdering my soldiers, and the intolerable pride with which all this was done, is but too well known.

Here the Queen ended her discourse ; but this rehearsal greatly augmented her afflictions ; nor was the countess of Nottingham without her concern in this matter ; for she had a like passion for the Earl ; which he slighting, it had turned her love into resentment ; so that all the return she had made to what the Queen had told her, was to express a zeal for her

service, and to persuade her from having any further kindness for the Earl, upon whose ruin she was wholly bent for the reason abovementioned. But though the Earl could not answer the Countess's desires no more than the Queen's, yet the Countess had another admirer, Secretary Cecil, who in the midst of his gravity, discovered some charms in the Countess of Nottingham, that created in him a strong passion for her ; and this passion was increased in both, by the extreme hatred they bore against Essex : though from different causes ; Cecil, because he looked upon the Earl as the obstacle of his ambitious pretensions ; and the enraged Countess for slighting her. They both rejoiced in the Earl's misfortunes, but were concerned at the Queen's still favourable inclination of him. — For when the Countess had taken leave of the Queen she presently repaired to Cecil, and acquainted him of all that had passed, and there they concerted the measures which were to be taken for the Earl's destruction. The first step whereunto was Cecil pressing the Queen to bring Essex to a trial ; and at the same time

causes the news of his death to be spread throughout the kingdom. In the mean time the unfortunate Earl was not without his thoughts exercized about his own affairs ; nor was it so much his life he was so solicitous about. He knew that he was beloved by the Queen, and knew also it was not in his own power to make her returns. He also knew as well he had deceived her, and that she might not only justly reproach him, but make him a sacrifice to her severest resentments. As for the Queen, notwithstanding all the black charges against Essex, she had still such a secret inclination for him, that she had neither the power nor the will to give him up to his ill fortune, without at least having heard himself ; to which end she fixed a resolution to go to his house (where he was under confinement) there to reproach him as he deserved ; or else, which she much desired, to find him innocent. In paying this visit, the Queen took so much care that no notice was taken of the indecency of it ; and was by her confidents, privately introduced alone into the chamber of the much beloved criminal. The Earl was sur-

prized at the Queen's coming in, and the Queen felt no small emotion herself at seeing him there a prisoner: But the Earl recovering himself, saluted her with a profound respect; and then so steadily fixed his eyes on her, that in spite of all her resolutions, she could not forbear shedding some tears, and as she was drying them up, Well, my Lord, said



she, you see what I do for you, notwithstanding all the crimes with which I can reproach you. I came to hear what you have to say in your justification: which I have loved you too well not to desire you may be able to make it out; and would Heaven were pleased it might be purchased with any the most precious thing in my power. Madam, replied

the Earl, fighing, my greatest crime is I thought myself too happy. Had you sat down there, said the Queen, I should have been too well pleased to have complained of you ; but was it so essential to your happiness, that you must destroy me to make yourself so ; or what need was there to your having had recourse to violent means to make yourself happy, in a fortune in the which I was ready and willing to bestow upon you, and to share with you in ? what reason could you have to seek the protection of the kings of Scotland and Spain ? did my interest oblige you to hold a secret correspondence with Tyrone ? and was it for the safety of my person, you design to make me your slave and his ? all you have done since to my subjects against my orders ; are these the expressions of your respect ? is it by fury and treason you shew your zeal to the public and me ? or is all we have seen and heard but illusion and fancy ? Yes, Madam, replied the Earl, those accusations of treasons and ill designs it was that run me upon the resistance I have made. You have been pleased to heap favours upon me ; and I too proud of

what I so little deserve, flattered myself with the expectations of a thousand pleasures, which you had not absolutely forbid me to hope for. This let loose the envy and jealousy of others against my good fortune ; they abused your Majesty with misinformations, and I had the misfortune to be assured that your Majesty had ordered me to be arrested, though my innocence would have persuaded me to the contrary, I confess, Madam, I was in a rage to see my enemies insult over me, and myself abandoned by your Majesty, and on the point of suffering perhaps a shameful death. I thought it neither for my reputation, nor your Majesty's honour that I should die as a criminal. This put me upon having recourse to these succours and assistance they reproach me with, and the resolution I took to go out of England, hoping to confound my accusers ; but I found all the passages stopped. I must acknowledge, in that desperate condition I vented my fury by seeking revenge on your ministers. They, Madam, and only they were the objects of the rebellion I am charged with.

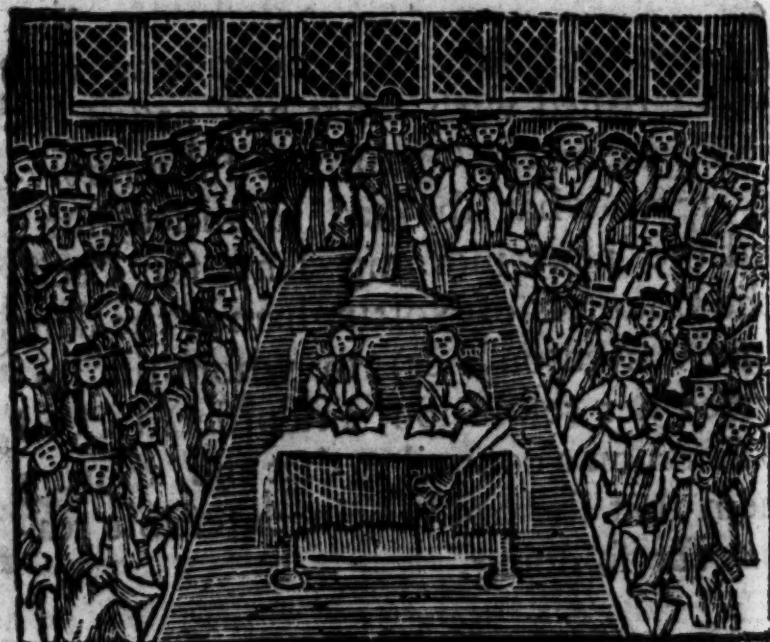
The Earl said many more things to his purpose, which would too much exceed the limits of this little book ; let it suffice, That by this passionate discourse he worked the Queen into so good an opinion of him, that she told him she would call a council on purpose for him in two days time, where she would declare him innocent, and restore him to all his former employments.

Leaving Essex, and going away very well satisfied with what had passed between them, the Queen was fully resolved upon what she had promised him ; and the next morning sent for Cecil, (the Countess of Nottingham at the same time waited on her) to whom she imparted her resolution, and ordered Cecil to summon a council to that end, assuring them that she had very incontestable reasons for so doing.

This made Cecil and the Countess look upon one another as persons whose projects for the Earl's destruction were now abortive ; and all their hopes were giving up the ghost. They saw the Queen

inflexible in her resolution ; and though both Cecil and the Countess had spoke to the Queen to divert her from her resolution, they saw it was to no purpose ; and Cecil was forced to order an extraordinary call of the council.

END of the FIRST PART.



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